



# **Applying for Citizenship:**

## **Naturalization**



If you're not a U.S. citizen by birth, you can only become a U.S. citizen through the process of *naturalization*.

### ***Who's Eligible to Become a U.S. Citizen by Naturalization?***

To become a U.S. citizen by naturalization, you must demonstrate (a) good moral character, (b) a knowledge of English, (c) an understanding of U.S. government and U.S. history, and (d) an attachment to the United States by taking an oath of allegiance to the U.S. Constitution.

Most people must also meet a permanent residence requirement, a continuous residence requirement, and a physical presence requirement. These requirements are different for different types of applicants, but in general they require (a) that you be a lawful permanent resident (have a "green card") for a few years (the permanent residence requirement), (b) that you haven't left the United States for too long a period of time before you apply for citizenship by naturalization (the continuous residence requirements), and (c) that you have been physically present in the United States for some period of time before you file your application (the physical presence requirement).

### ***Are There Different Requirements For Servicemembers?***

Yes. Servicemembers must meet the moral character, language, civics, and allegiance requirements, but they have different residency requirements. For anyone honorably serving in the armed forces in a designated time of hostilities (includes everyone serving after September 11, 2001), you do not need to be a lawful permanent resident, and you do not need to meet any continuous residence or physical presence requirement. However, you must have enlisted or re-enlisted while physically present in the U.S. or its territories (if you did not, you must be a lawful permanent resident on the day you file your application). If you did not serve during a period of hostilities, you will need to be a lawful permanent resident on the day that you file your application.

### ***What Are the Requirements For Family Members of Soldiers?***

Family members of Soldiers must meet the moral character, language, civics, and allegiance requirements like everyone else, but they have different residency requirements. If you are married to a servicemember who is a U.S. citizen, you must be a lawful permanent resident on the day of your interview for citizenship by naturalization, but you do not have to meet any continuous residence or physical presence requirements. Children of U.S. citizens should be able to obtain citizenship by birth, but if they cannot, they will need to follow their own citizenship by naturalization process.

### ***What's the Process For Naturalization?***

- (1) Completing the Application for Naturalization ( N-400), which requires:
  - a. Two standard color passport style photos, 2x2.
  - b. Form N-426 verification of service data, to be verified by your S1.
  - c. Form G-325B and SF 86, background check and consent forms (your S1 will send these to Army Central Personnel Security Clearance Facility for completion).
  - d. A copy of your Permanent Resident Card, front and back.
  - e. Applicant's cover letter.
  - f. Commander's cover letter.
  - g. Overseas Processing Form.
  - h. A fingerprint request form, FD 258, obtained from your S-2 or the Military Police desk.
  - i. Bring your application to Casey Legal Center and we will mail it to USCIS, Nebraska Service Center, P.O. Box 87426, Lincoln, NE 68501-7246.

- (2) Getting your fingerprints taken:
  - a. Receive an appointment letter from USCIS
  - b. Go to the fingerprinting location
  - c. Get your fingerprints taken
  - d. Mail additional documents if USCIS requests them
  - e. Wait for USCIS to schedule your interview
- (3) Being Interviewed
  - a. Receive an appointment for your interview
  - b. Go to your local office at the specified time
  - c. Bring identification and provide additional documents if USCIS requests them
  - d. Answer questions about your application and background
  - e. Take the English and Civics tests
  - f. Receive a decision
- (4) Taking the Oath
  - a. Receive a ceremony date
  - b. Check-in at the ceremony
  - c. Return your Permanent Resident Card
  - d. Answer questions about what you have done since your interview
  - e. Take the oath

***How long does the naturalization process take?***

The process takes about 6 months.

***How do I find out the status of my naturalization application?***

USCIS has established a toll-free military help line to assist Service members with immigration-related assistance. Representatives are available Monday through Friday, from 0800 until 1630, Central Standard Time, at 1-877-CIS-4MIL (1-877-247-4645). Or you may check the status of your application by going to the USCIS website and entering your case number as prompted. You can also email USCIS Nebraska at [military.nebraska.dhs.gov](mailto:military.nebraska.dhs.gov), or USCIS Seoul at [CIS-Seoul.natz@dhs.gov](mailto:CIS-Seoul.natz@dhs.gov).

***Does my spouse receive any benefits during naturalization because I am serving in the U.S. Military?***

Spouses of a Service member who is deployed or will be deployed in the next year may be eligible for expedited naturalization.

***Where can I get more Information?***

USCIS has a bunch of information, including a terrific pamphlet on naturalization that you can download. You can find it at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov). Look for a tab on “Citizenship”, about halfway down the page, and follow the link to “Citizenship Through Naturalization”. And of course you can always also ask questions at legal assistance!

	<b><u>Camp Casey Legal</u></b> Maude Hall Rm. 235, 730-3660	
<b><i>This information paper is one of a series of informative handouts containing general information on topics that legal assistance attorneys frequently advise on. Information provided is general in nature and does not constitute legal advice. Consult an attorney for specific legal advice for your particular situation. This information paper is distributed to persons eligible for legal assistance under 10 USC 1044.</i></b>		